

**MINUTES**

**PLANNING BOARD  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE**

**7:00 PM**

**JANUARY 24, 2019  
reconvened from  
JANUARY 17, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dexter Legg, Chairman; Elizabeth Moreau, Vice-Chairman; Colby Gamester; Jay Leduc; John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Rebecca Perkins, City Council Representative; Corey Clark, Alternate, and Polly Henkel, Alternate

**ALSO PRESENT:** Juliet Walker, Planner Director; Jillian Harris, Planner I

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jeffrey Kisiel, Ray Pezzullo, Assistant City Engineer

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**I. WORK SESSION**

A. Work session on proposed transportation corridor – Cate Street extension.

Juliet Walker noted that this work session is being held at the request of the Planning Board. The discussion will be related to the proposed connector road on Cate St. It is in the CIP as a project and has been considered as part the 428 Route 1 Bypass Project and the 105 Bartlett St. Subdivision. Both projects were asked to do a preliminary traffic analysis. City Traffic Engineer Eric Eby and Peer Reviewer Elizabeth Oltman from TEC have both reviewed the analysis. This work session will go over the connector road and identify the pros and cons that the City has concluded. Ms. Walker showed a map of the area and showed where Cate St. connected to Bartlett St. and Cottage St. today. The proposed connection would go from Bartlett St. to the Route 1 Bypass at a signalized intersection lining up with Borthwick Ave. There is a conceptual layout that was developed a few years ago. It is very preliminary at this point. It would be a basic city road with bike and pedestrian accommodations on one side. The road will widen to account for queuing at the Bypass intersection. This road will be proposed as a truck route.

Vice Chairman Moreau questioned if that would take the truck route off of Bartlett St. Ms. Walker confirmed that was correct. Right now truck traffic comes in off the Bypass and Bartlett St. is the truck route. There is neighborhood concern that there is a lot of truck traffic as well as a lot of cut through traffic. Their concern is that these streets are not built to handle this level of traffic.

Ms. Walker reviewed the existing conditions. Bartlett St. is a minor arterial road. It travels through a dense neighborhood with peak traffic in the commuter evening hours. There is significant queuing during peak travel times. Traffic can back up to the driveways of Ricci Lumber and beyond. The other issue is that the railroad bridge is near that intersection. It creates a constrained roadway condition, so cars can't stack at the Islington St. intersection. The City cannot change the bridge without the cooperation of the railroad and land acquisition. Mr. Eby commented that the sight lines coming around the bridge are very limited. There is a sidewalk only on one side.

Mr. Leduc noted that the traffic analysis showed that truck traffic accounted for 2-3%. Ms. Walker responded that the analysis counted truck traffic primarily during peak traffic times. The 2-3% was during the peak times. Mr. Leduc commented that truck traffic could be more consistent than commuter traffic. Ms. Walker noted that the analysis was at peak times because they were looking at the worst situations. This work session could give guidelines about what additional information the Board may need to ask for.

Ms. Walker noted that Cate St. is used as a cut through road to get around congestion on Bartlett St., but it was designed as a small local street. The bridge is in need of repair. This project may include closing that bridge or making it open only to pedestrians. Islington St. is a primary connector to downtown, Route 33 and 95. The two traffic analyses and peer review will set the stage for the discussion. It is a very preliminary analysis. The analysis for 105 Bartlett St. was done as part of the subdivision application. There was no development approval with it. They projected adding 125 dwelling units to Lot 5 and used that for the analysis. Three intersections were reviewed, Bartlett St. at the driveway, Bartlett St. at Cate St., and Bartlett St. at Islington St. The general findings were that the addition of this residential development would increase peak traffic by 45-50 vehicles per hour. Mr. Eby added that in general 50 cars or less would be a minor impact. Beyond those three intersections the traffic would dissipate and it would not be noticeable at all. Primarily the traffic would flow outbound in the morning and inbound in evening. That is the opposite of what is happening now. It's not a substantial change, but it also would not correct the queuing at the Islington St. intersection. The applicants recommended adding a left hand lane in the driveway for cars to turn onto Bartlett St. Mr. Eby added that the driveway is on a curve and the road is only 36 feet wide. Trucks will need the whole width of the road to make their turns. It would be too tight to add a lane. Also, it is a traffic calming measure if someone has to wait behind a left hand turning car.

Vice Chairman Moreau questioned if the Cate St. project was accounted for in the analysis. Ms. Walker responded that they looked at the potential Cate St. project to be included in the analysis. They typically ask to include projections for projects that have been approved. They added the potential project because it's for a road. Any background development that has already been approved by the Planning Board has been included in the projections. The conclusions were that the extension would decrease trips on Bartlett St. It would alter the travel patterns for people using the existing driveway. The recommendation included adding a "no right turn" sign to help direct traffic

Mr. Leduc noted that the road would reduce the traffic on Bartlett St. Residents will come out and go out to Route 1 Bypass, however, there is a queuing problem at the Route 1 Bypass now. Ms. Walker commented that the traffic analysis for that included more intersection analysis. The findings included an increase in vehicles in the evenings and on Saturdays midday. The addition of the extension would divert traffic off Bartlett St. There would still be an issue with added traffic on Cate St. There would likely be some queuing, but the proposal would be to take all the queuing off Bartlett St. The City looked at 3 different alternatives for the extensions. There are 3-4 legs for that intersection. They looked at how they are treated and the impact on how the traffic queues. Mr. Eby added that the intersection of Cate St. and

Bartlett St. has existing queuing problems that block Cate St. One alternate would be to leave it the way it is. The second was to put a stop sign at Bartlett St., so Cate St. would be the main road. Cars would be able to take a left immediately onto Cate St. The third would be to add a left hand turn lane, but leave the stop sign on Cate St. It would still take a long time to get onto Cate St. The most desirable option would be to make Cate St. the main roadway and put a stop sign on Bartlett St. That way the queuing would be on Cate St. and not on Bartlett St. It would also discourage vehicles from using Bartlett St. because the stop sign would add delays.

Chairman Legg questioned if the Bartlett St. stop sign would cause queuing on Islington St. Mr. Eby responded that the stop sign would be only southbound on Bartlett St. The intersection would be reconfigured a little bit to make Bartlett St. the side street. Mr. Gamester questioned if there was a rain garden proposed in the area where the intersection would be reconfigured. Mr. Eby responded that they have an easement to widen the intersection in that area.

Ms. Walker noted that the addition of the Cate St. connector would require changes at the Cate St. and Bypass intersection as well. The State has analyzed this as part of their traffic circle analysis. The City is exploring eliminating through traffic on Cottage St. This would eliminate two signals back to back. The City would create diverter road to get cars from Cottage St. to the Bypass. Mr. Eby commented that the long-term plan from DOT is to get rid of the Cottage St. signal. The left hand turn queuing would extend back past the intersection. The City needs to consider that the auto dealership and hotel would not be able to take a left if Cottage St. is closed. That would require the connector road to let people get back to the circle. The road would go between Coakley St. and Borthwick Ave. These traffic impacts are future year projections. It would not be on day one with the new projects. It will be a traffic problem 10-20 years in the future. There isn't enough storage on the Bypass to extend the left hand turn lane longer.

Mr. Gamester questioned if the City had operational control over the lights or if the State did. Ms. Walker responded that the City could collaborate with the State about the light timing. All of this would have to be approved because this would be going onto a state road. City Manager Bohenko questioned what would happen to the crosswalk from Coakley St. to Cottage St. if Cottage St. was closed. Mr. Eby responded that would be a challenge. City Manager Bohenko noted that the City paid for that crosswalk. Ms. Walker commented that they would keep that in mind. There would be substantial pedestrian improvements on the proposed roads. Chairman Legg questioned what the timeline would be to build the roads. Ms. Walker responded that the project is in the CIP. The City would be paying for the road. The State would participate, but the City would be in control of the funding and scheduling. Vice Chairman Moreau clarified that they would just need the State's approval. Ms. Walker confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Gamester questioned if adding a stop sign on Bartlett St. would increase the traffic coming out of 105 Bartlett St. Mr. Eby responded that there would be less traffic on Bartlett St., so it should be easy. Ms. Walker added that the 105 Bartlett St. project also got an easement for a driveway to Maplewood Ave.

Mr. Leduc questioned what drove the need for a crosswalk from Coakley St. to Cottage St. City Manager Bohenko responded that it's a walking connection for the neighborhood. The State said if the City wanted it, then the City could put it in. City Council made the decision to put it in. It was about \$200,000 to put it in. There was no way for people or bikes to get across the street, so they were isolated. Mr. Leduc clarified that the goal would be to maintain that connection. City Manager Bohenko responded that they should try to maintain the connection. It's the City's responsibility. Ms. Oltman noted that they would need a significant amount of study for that whole area to understand the whole intersection. There could be some balancing considerations. More people may go to Cate St. than anticipated because of queuing. It should all be monitored as the road goes in.

Ms. Walker summarized the pros and cons of the added road. The benefits to adding the road would include removing the cut through traffic. Moving the queuing to Cate St. would prevent the blocking of the Cate St. and Bartlett St. intersection. This would open up movement for vehicles on Bartlett St. It would create a better traffic flow. There would be a more direct access to Borthwick Ave. and the hospital. This would be a benefit for first responders. The future senior center will be on Cottage St., so the City needs to ensure the center is accommodated when Cottage St. is closed. The road would create bike pedestrian connections. It would divert traffic queuing from Islington St. to Cate St. The cons would be that the City would have to invest in some intersection improvements. Maintaining the Coakley St./Cottage St. crosswalk connection will be a challenge. This will not solve the queuing at the Islington St. and Bartlett St. intersection, but it does flag the issue of the railroad bridge. The overall traffic will increase.

Ms. Record clarified that only some of the pros listed would be immediate. Ms. Walker confirmed that the Cottage St. improvements would not be immediate.

City Council Representative Perkins was concerned about displacing traffic from Bartlett onto a truck throughway. The City should not fix everything for Bartlett St. and have Cate St. suffer. Ms. Walker responded that the primary goal would be to divert truck traffic. The developers are aware of that and the goal is to make an appealing street that can accommodate the traffic. It would be envisioned as a neighborhood street that would bring traffic to the Bypass. City Council Representative Perkins questioned if there was data on how many trucks choose the Bartlett St. route. Ms. Walker responded that the primary use was for Ricci Lumber. There was not more data about other truck routing. There can be additional analysis on that to see how much truck traffic would go away or increase with this change. The railroad bridge is a constraint for trucks.

Mr. Gamester questioned if the Cate St. extension project would even be in discussion without these development projects. Ms. Walker responded that the Cate St. project was identified as part of the bike/pedestrian plan. The primary reason it is in the CIP is that the residential neighborhoods are rallying around the project. That's the primary driver, but the neighborhood has not sat down and looked at the pros and cons. There may be something the neighborhood has not anticipated. City Manager Bohenko commented that one thing they want to get out of this no matter what happens is the right of ways to put a road in. That way in the future the City could do something. At the very least the right of ways need to be secured.

Mr. Clark commented that it is sometimes impossible to get in the left hand lane when taking a right onto the Bypass from Cottage St. Mr. Clark knew that was in the DOT territory, but questioned if that would be addressed in the future. Mr. Eby responded that was part of a DOT plan for the traffic circle. It is not on a list, but they have looked at how to improve it. It is a big plan with no funding. City Manager Bohenko noted that they have to be careful about the Cate St. queuing. Ms. Oltman noted that they would have to look at the whole area and come up with how to make it all function in an ideal way. They won't ever solve it to be perfect for everything. The goal is to make it as safe and efficient as possible. Ms. Walker added that the Route 1 Bypass has more capacity for queuing.

Mr. Gamester questioned if the City had a cost estimate yet. Ms. Walker responded that they have not gotten numbers on the intersection improvements. Mr. Eby commented that a stop sign cost \$100. Ms. Walker noted that it's a new road, so there will be a lot involved.

Chairman Legg questioned how recently the City looked at the Islington Bartlett intersection. City Manager Bohenko responded that major reports came out in 1963 and identified this as a priority. The problem is with the railroad. They would have to reconfigure the track. It would not be cheap and land

with businesses would be impacted. They would only be able to move forward with land acquisition. Mr. Eby responded that they have looked at a couple options in the past. One option was to make Bartlett St. go straight across to Jewel Court or straighten it to Islington St. That would require land acquisition to widen the road. Chairman Legg commented that traffic will only get worse in the intersection. Residents should understand what is possible and what is not possible. The study should be updated and so the cost should be known. Then City Council should decide if the money is worth the expense. City Manager Bohenko commented that the project would need to get a design. Chairman Legg noted that there should be a refreshed study. City Manager Bohenko agreed.

Mr. Leduc questioned if this was one of the worst bottlenecks in the City. Mr. Eby responded that it is one of the more problematic pinch points because of the combination of the narrow road and the bridge height restriction. City Manager Bohenko added if there was no issue with funding or land acquisition, then this would be the first one done.

City Council Representative Perkins noted that they were expecting the cost to be big because it's a pinch point. It would good to show what the pedestrian plans are for the area. Chairman Legg assumed that pedestrians would be considered at the intersections as well. Ms. Walker agreed and noted that they were also looking at the North Mill Pond Trail. That will come in on the northern side of Ricci Lumber and the City will have to figure out how to get pedestrians to and from the other connections. That will be a real challenge.

## II. PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL CONSULTATION

- A. The application of **Torrington Properties, Inc. and Waterstone Properties Group, Inc., Applicants**, for property located at **428 Route 1 By-Pass**, requesting a second Preliminary Conceptual Consultation review for a mixed use development.

John Bosen from Bosen & Associates introduced the project team which included: Jay Bisognano from Cate Street Development, LLC, David Snell, Dave Chilinski, and Jeff Gannon from PCA, Rick Lundborne from Fuss & O'Neil and Greg Mikolaitis from August Consulting. The project team has been over the existing conditions in the last Conceptual Design presentation. Tonight they will present two plans. The plans are a culmination of developer and public input. The journey started in December of 2017. There has been neighborhood meetings, TAC work sessions, and this is the third Conceptual Design meeting. The project team has met with City Staff, DOT and the Conservation Commission. There are a lot of variables. The developers are willing to work with the City and give them the road. Jay Bisognano will talk about the work force housing and David Snell will present the plans.

Jay Bisognano commented that they have spent a significant amount of time on the project and think they have the best program for the site. The development team has worked with the Planning Department, neighbors, and the Planning Board to create a plan that will improve the site and give the City benefits. The plan will include a land conveyance to the City for a future road. This is the first project to go through under the new Ordinance. The team is looking for the Planning Board's endorsement to proceed. The project density has been scaled down. The team believes in the creation of work force housing. They own and operate two boutique hotels and the Viridian Apartments in Portsmouth. The employees working in those buildings would benefit from WFH. The team is looking at other development opportunities in the City and is hopeful that WFH would be a component of those. Mr. Bisognano has been involved in the creation of successful WFH with other projects in

Massachusetts. The requirement in MA is almost always 10% of the units will be WFH. It's not negotiable. 10% WFH works because that is what makes sense financially. More than that would require subsidies, which would make the project more complicated and delay progress. A single dwelling would cost \$250,000. The development would need to make 6.75 million to absorb the 10% WFH. Units that are considered WFH would break even or in some cases lose money for the development. To make this work the project needs have enough market rate units to absorb the loss on the WFH units. Anything more than 27 WFH units would create a significant issue for the project. The team will proceed with the alternate plan that doesn't have the WFH component. The alternate plan meets zoning requirements, so it would not require WFH. That is not the preferable plan, but they need to proceed. By right the zoning allows for 242 units with no WFH. The preferred plan would create 272 units, and 27 of those units would be WFH. This project is not building for an 80% bonus. The team is asking for a 12.5% increase in density. The preferred plan would contribute 2 acres of land to the City at no cost for the creation of a road. The team is willing to contribute a portion of money to construct the road and plan to contribute over 1 million in real estate tax revenue.

David Snell from PCA showed a picture of the site. This is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the West End Neighborhood. The idea is to create a mixed-use development to take advantage of and contribute to the neighborhood. The site is 12.2 acres and bisected by Cate St. The site is primarily impervious. When it is redeveloped the impervious surface will be reduced. Mr. Snell presented the alternate plan that showed what they are allowed to develop by right. There would be 24 units per building with 20 units per acre and it would total to 242 units. The left side would have two commercial spaces. There would be 20,000 square feet of retail and 20,000 square feet for office space. There are a few different configuration options. This plan adheres to the ordinance guidelines and this is the development that results. The preferred plan would include the land swap to convey 2 acres to the City. The project goals include building a community, creating a connection, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and being eco-conscious. The proposed site plan shows the road. To the left of the site along Route 1 there would be a 2 story 2,200 square foot building for office space over retail and restaurants. The residential buildings are combined into two buildings vs. the 11 buildings in the other plan. This allows them to create more efficient buildings that would take up less coverage in the site. There would be less impervious surface. Both buildings would be 4 stories. Building A would have 134 units and Building B would have 116 units. To the right of those buildings would be 23 townhouse condos. The goal is to create homeownership on the site. It would be good to have a mix of ownership and rent. The open space that would be created in this plan would be more meaningful. There would be much larger spaces. They will create a dog park and the open space between the buildings will be called the "Junction." There will also be other open spaces called the "Courtyard," "Front Porch," and "Backyard." The yellow lines on the plan indicate the pedestrian access in the site. There will be a multi-modal pathway going along the road. The areas in purple represent the active ground floor uses in the buildings, which will help to activate the open spaces. The residential buildings will be set 30 feet back from Cate St. A big part of the project will be to clean up Hodgson's Brook. There will be a planting buffer, then the multi-use path, and then the road. The first floor units in the residential building will have outdoor patios. There will be a lot of pedestrian traffic. Mr. Snell showed a cross section of the plan to show the buffer, the path, a landscape buffer, the road, another buffer, and then the patios. The townhouses would be very similar, but there would be a bigger buffer. The setback from road would also be less. The "Junction" open space will have a food hall at the end with outdoor space. There would be a raised drive to not make traffic feel they are not in charge. There will also be bollards. The amenity space for the resident building will be opposite the food hall. Mr. Snell showed a conceptual rendering. There will be outdoor seating, spill out from the fitness center, and a roof deck overlooking the space.

Chairman Legg questioned what the potential square footage in the public spaces would be. Mr. Snell noted that public benefits are an investment to Portsmouth and are key in building a community and improving the environment. There are a lot of benefits to the plan including increasing housing supply, providing the road, creating 300 part time and full time jobs, cleaning up Hodgson's Brook and properly treating the runoff. This plan does not meet the units per acre without a bonus. They are asking for a small increase from 22 per acre to 22.5 units per building and building length. David Chilinski commented that the public space would be about 100 feet from building face to building face. The whole neighborhood would be about 10-11,000 square feet of public space. Ms. Walker noted that the City's zoning asked for 60% AMI for WFH. This plan is asking for 80% AMI.

City Council Representative Perkins was cognizant of fact that the development team was permitted to build more than they were asking to, and requested they talk more about that. Mr. Snell responded that building the maximum amount units would eliminate so much of the potential open space. Mr. Bisognano added that it's a mitigation of risk for the development team. A lot of absorption would be required for the maximum amount of units. City Council Representative Perkins clarified that the plan was based on the sweet spot of viability. Mr. Bisognano confirmed that was correct.

Vice Chairman Moreau questioned if all of the townhouses would be for rent or sale. Mr. Bisognano responded that they would be for sale. The adjacent development is the same way. Vice Chairman Moreau questioned how many years would they keep the WFH units. Mr. Bisognano responded that they had not discussed that yet, but it would be a really long time. It would not be short term. If the Federal Government provides subsidies the WFH units are required for 40 years. It would be for that amount of time or more. Vice Chairman Moreau requested clarification on the public vs. private green spaces. Mr. Snell responded that they have not been specified at this point. Most of it will be public other than the patios for residences. Ms. Walker added that it has to be public to be counted as a community space in the ordinance.

Mr. Leduc questioned if the team has worked with the abutting condo units to discuss about the cooperation in maintenance. Mr. Bisognano responded that this plan was still conceptual, so it would be tough to be specific. They are open to working with us as we move forward.

Ms. Henkel noted that it looked like there was more green space in the alternate plan. Jeff Gannon from PCA responded that the green spaces are about the same. It is 18-20% of the space. In the preferred scheme the green space areas are much larger.

Mr. Clark noted that it looks exactly like the October but with fewer units. Mr. Bisognano responded that the big difference was that the buildings went from 5 stories to 4 stories. The new plan needed less parking, so there can be more green space. Mr. Snell added that the buildings are also further back from the street. Mr. Clark requested the team talk about the storm water management. Rick Lundborne from Fuss and O'Neil responded that it's pretty programmed out, but they would be tearing everything down. There would be an opportunity to bury a lot of the treatment. They had previously talked about rain gardens along Hodgson's Brook. However, it is better to keep the buffer along the brook. The sidewalks were moved to be tight to the road. There will be rain gardens on the corner that would be treating storm water from the road. Catch basins and a swale will also be added. Right now the water runs right off the pavement. The plans will infiltrate and filter water wherever possible. The soil has sand and clay, so that will have to be taken into account for treatment. Mr. Clark requested clarification on what they may do to Hodgson Brook. Mr. Lundborne responded that currently the brook has a lot of trash. Some of the natural items like granite and rocks will stay, but the unnatural things like bowling balls will be taken out. There

is small pocket of knotweeds that will be removed, killed and replaced with native species. Mr. Clark questioned if the “Junction” would always be open to cars. Mr. Snell responded that it would. The only time it would be closed would be for events. The retail parking will be accessed a different way. Cars are welcome there, but made to feel they are not the owner of the space. The “Junction” will be on a big speed bump with a lot of people around. They can drive there, but the pedestrian is the most important.

Vice Chairman Moreau requested clarification about the circulation of truck deliveries. Mr. Snell responded that trucks would drive up against the U-Haul and then loop around.

Chairman Legg questioned what the AMI was for the projects that were done in MA with 10% WFH. Mr. Bisognano responded that it varies, but in the area of his projects it has been 80% AMI. Chairman Legg questioned if those projects were in Boston proper. Cambridge and Somerville are requiring 20%. Mr. Bisognano confirmed that his projects were in Boston proper. The rents in Cambridge are more than double the market, so developers can absorb that percentage. Not a lot gets built there. Chairman Legg questioned what the size of the units would be. Mr. Bisognano responded that ¼ of them would be studios, another quarter would be one bedrooms, then one bedrooms with a den and finally two bedrooms.

Chairman Legg questioned if the team was looking for direction on which proposal to go with. Ms. Walker commented that the Planning Board is allowed to make modifications to the requirements for density bonuses. There was discussion about the appropriate percentage. The Board stuck to 60% AMI because that’s what has been used. The Planning Board has the ability to modify the requirements for WFH granted in a CUP. The Board is not required to modify anything, but the Ordinance provides the flexibility. They will have to come back for a site plan approval and a CUP. They are looking to see if the Board is open to modifications and if the Board would like any additional information. The Board should give them some direction on which way to go.

Vice Chairman Moreau liked this design better than the last one. There is a better buffer and the decrease in density is good. Because of that, Vice Chairman Moreau would be more apt to accept 10%. There would need to be a long-term commitment for those WFH units. The green space and connectivity are great. Safety is a huge concern because they are connecting a lot of pedestrian to retail and office space. It would be good to show it’s safe for everyone. It is a better design and it works.

Mr. Leduc noted that the team heard the discussion about the Cate St. extension and questioned if they had any concerns with traffic queuing. Mr. Bisognano responded that there is a concern, but it is less of a concern because there is less density. Mr. Leduc liked the design. There is a lot green space and sidewalks. Mr. Leduc was worried about traffic, but was in favor of this design. Mr. Leduc wanted a long commitment on the green space as well. It should be preserved as much as possible.

City Manager Bohneko echoed the previous comments and agreed it was a good design.

City Council Representative Perkins also echoed what was previously said. City Council Representative Perkins would have been happy with more density, but that would be up to the team. This works for the team and the Board. It has been helpful to make this process transparent and to understand the constraints of the site.

Chairman Legg commented that this plan was far better than what was presented in October. Chairman Legg asked the team to look at what adding 15% WFH and using a sliding income scale would do to the economics. It may not change. The staff should do an economic analysis. Ms. Walker commented that it is in the zoning that they can ask for as much financial information to help make a decision. Chairman Legg commented that he wanted this to be successful. Mr. Bisognano confirmed they would look at it.

City Council Representative Perkins also thought that there would be value in the financial analysis to help Planning Board and the public understand the economics better. The City's zoning ordinance should make it easier to build projects not more complicated.

Ms. Henkel commented that it will be great that Hodgson Brook will be remediated and that the City will get the right of way.

Mr. Clark commented that in October he was concerned about the numbers, but agreed with everything else that everyone has said.

- B. The application of **RJF-Maplewood, LLC, owner, and RW Norfolk Holdings, LLC, applicant** for property located at **111 Maplewood Avenue**, requesting Preliminary Conceptual Consultation review for a new free standing structure (construct a 4 ½ story mixed-use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 8 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD 5), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

Patrick Crimmins from Tighe and Bond and Lisa DeStefano from DeStefano Architects spoke to the design. Mr. Crimmins commented that the site is bound by Vaughn St., Maplewood Ave. and Raynes Ave. There is an existing office building. There was a previous development on the site. This design is for a 75,000 square foot 3-story commercial building. The site is situated in the CD5 District, so there is a bonus incentive for providing 25% community space. The 3.5 stories will be 50 feet in height. Maplewood Ave. is on a 7-9 foot grade difference. Underground parking will be provided with an entry to the garage off of Vaughn St. There will be 90 parking spaces below the building. There would be service parking on the site with the existing parking spaces. They are working to identify a service area for trash and transformers etc. The City has been working through the Maplewood Ave. corridor for street improvements. This project would implement that part of the street in the site plan. There is a gateway park identified as part of the community space. There will be more open space in the plaza as well. The 90 parking spaces below will serve tenants the tenants of the building. There will be a drop off area on Court St. There will be an opportunity to put storm water management devices underground with access to maintain them. The team is engaging with the utility companies. There is a switch along Vaughn St. that will be a consideration of the design.

Mr. Leduc questioned if there would be some rework between Vaughn St. and Maplewood Ave. Mr. Crimmins responded that they had that in the prior design. They would be T-ing up the intersection.

Mr. Gamester questioned if the site was the whole block length. Mr. Crimmins responded that the developed area is 58,000 square feet. That is the focus for now.

Lisa DeStefano noted that they are looking at a building that has four fronts. It will be important to have activation on Vaughn St. because of the garage. There will be other activation opportunities on Raynes St. and Maplewood Ave. Pulling the building back a little will help with site lines. The view approaching the City is important. The design considers the height of the buildings across the street. The goal is to create a street edge that is important in urban design. There is a lot more to be developed as they go through the Historic District Commission Work Sessions. The Board will see more architecture coming. The building will go from 2 stories to 3 stories to 3.5 stories for portions of the building. This is an office building, so there will be more opportunities for glass and rhythm that would be different from a residential building and hotel. There will be a cascading staircase to bring people from Maplewood Ave. to Vaughn St. They are presenting the design early on to get comments.

Mr. Leduc questioned if there was a strategic decision to not do any residential. Ms. DeStefano responded that there is a need for a commercial user in the town of Portsmouth. This gets into the symbiotic use of an office in the downtown.

Vice Chairman Moreau was present for all of the meetings on the last building. This one is better. The underground parking is amazing. There is a huge need for office space with parking. The park and stepping grade off Maplewood Ave. are great. The size of the building will appease the public. The stairway down to Vaughn St. will help activate that area.

City Council Representative Perkins liked this design; it fits the site better. The team should be conscious of the width of the sidewalk, the height and activation along the side of the garage. They should make sure it goes with the surrounding area.

Mr. Leduc questioned if there would be sidewalks on both sides of the street. Ms. Walker confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Clark clarified that they were going with the community space bonus. Ms. DeStefano confirmed that was correct. Mr. Clark noted that the park was a great idea. The garage activation area would be great. Mr. Clark noted that there was an AOT for the site that has expired and questioned if there would be a new one. Mr. Crimmins confirmed that was correct.

City Manager Bohenko requested that Ms. Walker walk through the next steps and timeframe. Ms. Walker responded that the Planning Board might need to see the project for the parking location. There is going to be a zoning board request. The project will go to TAC. The site was recently approved as another project, so they are familiar as far as utilities go. It should move along in a fairly straightforward way. A project usually had 3-4 meetings with HDC.

Chairman Legg echoed the comments from the Board. The fact that it's office space is huge. They can get away from some of the traditional architecture. If it works will be a stunning building. It is well thought out at the conceptual level. Chairman Legg was excited to see the project come back.

Mr. Gamester clarified that all of the open space would be community space on the site. Mr. Crimmins confirmed that was correct. Mr. Gamester clarified that the relief was previously granted for parking spaces. Ms. Walker confirmed that was correct. Mr. Gamester questioned if the building design would work if it needed to be broken up into more than one office. Ms. DeStefano responded that the plan was for one office, but it will be built with flexibility. There is potential for a ground floor café. Chairman Legg questioned if that was for sure. Ms. DeStefano responded that it was just commercial space for now and as it comes into development it may evolve.

Mr. Leduc liked the previous application and was glad to see it come back. It is a critical piece of property. Buildings like this are very important. The green spaces in the plan were good. Mr. Leduc questioned if the trees on Maplewood Ave. would remain or if they would be replaced. Ms. DeStefano was not sure yet.

### **III. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Gamester moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m, seconded by City Manager Bohenko. The motion passed unanimously.